

STATEMENT IN SUPPORT
A School Year Like No Other Demands More Resources & Partners:
Afterschool & Community Partners Can Help

We are deeply concerned about the impact of social isolation on our children and youth. Children best connect, learn, and thrive when they are with peers and caring adults. Virtual learning is not possible or successful for *all* students. In order for our economy to recover, parents need to be able to work. Children with disabilities are impacted by social isolation and adjustment to virtual learning at a greater level than their non-disabled peers. As school districts plan for learning in the fall, they need to think beyond the school building and school staff to create a learning ecosystem that: follows public health safety protocols; keeps our children engaged and learning; and ensures that parents can work. We will need more space, more time, more educators, and more resources.

Schools need help, and afterschool programs and community-based organizations can answer that call for assistance. Afterschool, “out-of-school,” summer, expanded learning, and community-based programs (local providers, Boys and Girls Clubs, YMCAs, 4-H, Girls Inc, parks and rec, museums, religious centers, etc.) operate at the nexus of schools, families, and communities. Programs offer opportunities for youth to develop strong, trusting relationships that research shows can help buffer the impact of adverse childhood experiences and trauma.^[1] Students who participate regularly in quality afterschool programs show improved engagement indicators such as attendance, behavior, and coursework.^[2] And programs provide spaces for deeper learning and for youth to use their talents, skills, and interests to innovate and thrive.^[3]

Community partners will be critical in helping schools address the inequities that have been exacerbated by COVID-19, providing academic, social, and emotional support to those students who need it most. During the pandemic, many afterschool and summer programs helped to lessen these gaps, continuing operations on-site and virtually and providing a foundation for a redesigned learning day. Programs served as bridges between families and schools, providing the cultural and linguistic connections to help families understand new school procedures and access necessary resources in the community including food, health, and economic supports. Faith-based organizations and institutions, public libraries, museums of all types, institutions of higher education, local businesses, and other community-based organizations can all offer creative supports and physical spaces to support the needs of students and families.

This school year, as schools across the country are planning staggered schedules, hybrid learning, and virtual learning to keep children, families, and our communities safe, the hours students are physically “out of school” will increase dramatically compared to previous school years.

We need to work together to tap all the assets in our communities to support children and families, and involve afterschool and community partners in school reopening plans and implementation policies.

Together, we can ensure that *all* our children are learning, safe, and engaged; that parents can return to work; and that communities can rebuild their economic strength during the increased periods of “out-of-school time” in the new learning day. The full **[Blueprint for How Afterschool Programs & Community Partners Can Help](#)** can be accessed [here](#).

National Organizations in Support

Afterschool Alliance	Girl Scouts of the USA
After-School All-Stars	Girls Inc.
Alliance for a Healthier Generation	Girls on the Run
AlphaBEST Education, Inc.	Global Family Research Project
America SCORES	Institute for Educational Leadership
American Alliance of Museums	International Association of Blacks in Dance
American Association for State and Local History	kid-grit
American Camp Association	League of American Orchestras
American Institutes for Research	Learning Policy Institute
Americans for the Arts	MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership
America's Promise Alliance	National 4-H Council
Association of Art Museum Directors	National AfterSchool Association
Association of Children's Museums	National Alliance for Public Charter Schools National
Association of Science and Technology Centers	Association of Elementary School Principals National
Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD)	Association of Secondary School Principals National
Big Brothers Big Sisters of America	Girls Collaborative Project
BOOST Collaborative	National League of Cities
Boys and Girls Clubs of America	National Recreation and Park Association
CampFire	National Summer Learning Association
Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)	National Youth Leadership Council
Classroom, Inc	Outward Bound USA
Coaching Corps	Rural School and Community Trust
Coalition for Community Schools	Save the Children
Committee for Children	School-Based Health Alliance
Communities in Schools	Search Institute
Council for Strong America	Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
Education Redesign Lab, Harvard Graduate School of Education	STEM Next Opportunity Fund
Education Trust	Teach for America
Every Child Matters	Techbridge
Every Hour Counts	The Forum for Youth Investment
Excelencia in Education	United Way Worldwide
First Tee	US Chamber of Commerce Foundation
Food Research & Action Center	Write Brain
Foundations, Inc	YMCA of the USA
	Young Rembrandts
	Youth Service America